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general way this phrase expresses exactly what has been lacking in most of the debates and the discussions about preparedness that we have heard or read during the past year or two. In its strict sense the phrase denotes a logical, thoroughly-tried-out method of determining just what a military force has to do, what means are at its command, and what difficulties it has to overcome. It may be stretched to include in a general sense all that Admiral Fiske treats of in the second half of his book.

Practically the heart of the treatise is comprised in the author's chapters upon "Designing the Machine," "Preparing the Active Fleet," and "Operating the Machine." It is not upon the qualities of armorplate or the penetrating power of projectiles or the advantages of certain types of ships that the author enlarges, but upon the navy as a complex organism—as an instrument composed partly of flesh and blood and brains and partly of steel. Just why is it so extremely important that the number of "personal parts" in the machine should be exactly right? The question admits of something like a mathematical answer. "An insufficient number of men in the ratio of 9 to 8, may mean a falling off in the output of the machine much greater than in the ratio of 9 to 8." Why is a general staff so important a part of naval organization? "In order to direct the drills of a fleet toward some worthy end, that end itself must be clearly seen; and in order that it may be clearly seen, it first must be discovered. The end does not exist as a bright mark in the sky, but as the answer to a difficult problem." This, with the insight that the author gives us into the problems of strategy and into the actual methods of their solution, is a more than adequate reply to our query. Just how does skill in operating the naval machine "come in"? The author's explanation of the elementary principles of naval tactics and of the relative power of two fleets in action as the battle progresses, not only answers this question fully but impresses upon one, as nothing else could, the tremendous importance of dependable, correlated, highly developed skill in the navy.

Even if the navy were kept up only as an object lesson in efficiency, one would like to put Admiral Fiske's book into the hands of young men simply as a study of the way in which difficult practical problems containing many variables have to be solved—as a study, too, in the relation between duty and efficiency. But the book has an important practical and present message. It is an authoritative book, a simple book, a book that contains just the facts—technical or otherwise—that are needed for intelligent judgment.

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LETTERS OF RICHARD WATSON GILDER. Edited by his daughter, ROSAMOND GILDER. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916.

"Life is a tug." So St. Gaudens once remarked to La Farge, with whom he was collaborating in connection with the Church

of the Ascension. "Four words," wrote Richard Watson Gilder, "never conveyed more positive and truthful information with fewer syllables and a more downright presentation of the effect of inanimate nature upon the soul." The pithy little sentence expresses, indeed, one side of Mr. Gilder's life experience as revealed in his correspondence. The letters are in the main busy letters. Some of them reflect interesting social experiences; many refer to interests of importance. If one cared to do so, one could no doubt patch together from them an interesting supplementary narrative of various modern movements in which Mr. Gilder was concerned. Now and then the letters give form and body to enthusiasms or portray a relation such as the author's friendship with Cleveland in an appealing and fully satisfactory way. For the most part, however, the letters are valuable as a record of Mr. Gilder's abundant and varied activities, portraying the man thus worthily but somewhat more distantly than autobiographies or collections of letters sometimes do. The real self-revelations of the writer of these letters are, where he wished them to be, in his poems.

Civil service reform, international copyright, the Tenement House Commission, municipal politics—these are only a few of the concerns with which Mr. Gilder effectively busied himself, besides doing the exacting work of editing the *Century Magazine*. "One problem to which he gave particular attention was that of fire prevention. In order to understand the subject thoroughly he arranged to have Fire Chief Bresnan call for him whenever a serious fire broke out in the tenement house district, no matter what the hour might be." Can we imagine one of the subtlest poets of our time, dressed in a fireman's helmet and rubber coat, clattering through the streets at night to inspect charred and smoking ruins? It is a little difficult, but so it was.

"It has taken a good many deaths of friends among the poets (alas!), and a great many gray hairs," wrote Gilder in 1909, "to make people realize that my books of rhyme were *me*." Yet the same man could write in his editorial character: "I would rather have one article by Grant on a battle won by him, I would rather read it, print it, publish it, than twenty articles by Daudet on Mistral." And yet the many-sidedness of this variously active and variously expressive man did not result in any lack of unity or of conviction. The letters reveal no painful lines of cleavage. He would be a rash man who should try to define absolutely either "culture" or "personality"; but Richard Watson Gilder had them both with a certain wholeness—one proof of which is his power as a critic. To Lawrence Gilman, for example, he wrote (speaking of music and poetry): "While I am often under the spell . . . of the specialist in moods (like Poe, we will say), nevertheless the poet of mood, who is also the poet of action, seems to me the greater artist: Shelley (*Sensitive Plant*, etc.) or

Browning (*Childe Roland*), greater than Poe; Shakespeare or Keats greater than Verlaine or Yeats, however beautiful the latter may be. Yet the mood-specialist or expert has his place in poetry, and necessarily, also, in music." This is broad and suggestive without being vague or doubtful.

The comments of such a man upon others and the record of his relations with them are, naturally, of interest. Even his casual remarks have reality and distinction. Of Browning he wrote: "He reminds me of an india rubber ball, he has so much bounce, and is round and sudden; very jolly and kindly, though, and interested in things, especially in art." He could go deeper. "Paderewski!" he wrote. "He is quite by himself—reminding me of no one but the young Swinburne! His genius is altogether individual, and, if the individuality appeals, fascinating. It appealed to me immensely. He is not sublime, but most intensely poetic . . . there is a quiet alertness, like some queer new animal sure of its prey."

Undoubtedly he had the great grace of understanding. No mean proof of this is Bill Nye's remark that "he could return rejected manuscripts in such a gentle and caressing way that the disappointed scribblers came to him from hundreds of miles away to thank him for his kindness and stay to dinner with him!"

But it is not only in the richness of his sympathies and of his personal life as revealed in his relations to contributors and to a whole galaxy of notable persons—Cleveland, Joe Jefferson, Modjeska, a host of them; it is not only in the fact that he edited the *Century*, "not for a single number but for years"; it is not only in the manifold activities to which the "old ancestral conscience" drove him, that we see the man. It is in all of these. Here is pictured a man who led an intense intellectual, æsthetic, and moral life in full daylight, in purposeful contact with his fellows, supported through trials and perplexities Heaven knows how—never sacrificing his ideals. This is the significance of the *Letters*. And one admonition rings through the book: "Don't let literature and art make dilettanti of us!"

JOHN WEBSTER AND THE ELIZABETHAN DRAMA. By RUPERT BROOKE. New York: John Lane Company, 1916.

The dissertation about John Webster with which the late and truly lamented Rupert Brooke won his fellowship at Kings College, Cambridge, in 1913, is not only clever and penetrating, but also good criticism. These two correlative statements are not, in this empirical and disjointedly philosophical age, quite equivalent.

The clever, clear, negational thinking which makes the first part of Mr. Brooke's thesis a somewhat extensive essay on how not to criticize the Elizabethan drama, is valuable. It gives our old-fash-